



Office of the Governor State of Montana Office of Community Service

Fall 2008

Service News



Community Building Institute held in August

For two days in August, more than 140 AmeriCorps VISTA members, their site supervisors and other community partners from around the state attended the Community Building Institute (CBI) at the Red Lion Colonial Inn in Helena. The primary goal of CBI is to provide participants with an opportunity to learn about the community building process, identify where they are in the process, and develop a plan for implementing the process to address their community need. The curriculum for the event is based upon the Kansas University Workgroup for Community Health and Development. CBI is sponsored by the Corporation for National & Community Service and the Montana Office of Community Service. Community partners and members of AmeriCorps State, Learn and Serve, and Citizen Corps programs are invited to attend this training held each year in February and August.

In Memoriam

Sadly, our friend and colleague, **June Atkins**, died August 19 after a long battle with cancer. June joined the Montana Office of Public Instruction in 1989 and most recently served as Communication Arts Specialist. She also served as the Learn and Serve Director. June was most visible in her leadership roles with the Montana State Reading Council and the International Reading Association. She was a dedicated teacher and her legacy includes a lasting effect on thousands of Montana educators and Montana children. We are all grateful for her commitment to education and service — she will be dearly missed.



Participants enjoying a picnic during the Community Building Institute

Commissioner's Corner



Keith Kelly

Commissioner,
Department of Labor and
Industry, State of Montana
and Vice Chair of the
Montana Commission on
Community Service

Keith Kelly was appointed in 2005 by Governor Brian Schweitzer to serve as the Commissioner of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. Prior to being appointed Commissioner of Labor, Kelly served as the Division Administrator for the Unemployment Insurance Division for the Department of Labor and Industry. Kelly has a long history of public service; he was the Director of the Montana Department of Agriculture under former Governor Ted Schwinden, the Administrator of the Farm Service Agency in Washington D.C. under President Clinton, the Deputy Secretary of State under former Secretary of State Mike Cooney and he was the Director of the Arizona Department of Agriculture for seven years under a Republican Governor.

While Kelly is proud of his public service record, he says it's today's youth that are really making a difference in their communities. "This newer generation recognizes the importance of community service and the role they play in making their communities a better place," says Kelly.

The Montana Commission on Community Service is a diverse, non-partisan, and Governor appointed body representing a broad cross-section of community service interests and statewide leadership in Montana. The Commission's administrative arm, the Governor's Office of Community Service (OCS), is a state agency funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the State of Montana and various private donations.



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Higher Education, Community Service, and Service Learning

**George M. Dennison, President
The University of Montana**

Colleges and universities have responded strategically to increased competition for the best and brightest students by developing their distinctive brands. To that end, more and more campuses have relied on the provision of opportunities for community service and service learning to attract students, as evidenced by the growth in the membership of Campus Compact, an organization of presidents and chancellors of post-secondary institutions, from 4 institutions in the early 1980s to more than 1,100 at the latest count. According to its mission statement, Campus Compact "advances the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to serve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility." In 1999, in pursuance of that mission, a group of Compact member presidents and chancellors met at the Aspen Institute in Colorado and adopted the Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education. Without question, the member presidents and chancellors guide their institutions to fulfill these commitments while simultaneously responding to the rising demands of succeeding generations of students for service and engagement.

A number of commentators, including Professor Robert Putnam of Harvard University in several articles and books, have noted the surge of community-mindedness among all sectors of the nation that came in the wake of the tragedies of 11 September 2001. As potential students have demanded opportunities for community service and engagement, and faculty members have sought innovative ways to make instruction relevant and meaningful, the service learning movement has spread to campuses at all levels across the country. The 1,100 member presidents and chancellors in recognition have committed their institutions to community service and service learning, and together their institutions account for more than 6 million students contributing service valued at more than \$5 billion annually. Simultaneously, the institutions vie for listing in the *Princeton Review's* "Colleges with a Conscience," on the "President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll" issued by the Corporation for National and Community Service, or for elective classification by the Carnegie Commission for "Community Engagement."

Numerous research studies affirm that related educational benefits accrue to students from involvement in community service and service learning. According to these studies, the participating students persist to graduation at higher rates and show greater improvement in their critical thinking and communication skills, their tolerance for, acceptance of, and comfort with difference, and their competency to work collaboratively with others as members of focused teams. Gallini and Moely (*Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 2003) cited student comments that service learning courses promote interpersonal, community, and academic engagement, offer more academic challenge than traditional courses, and encourage continued matriculation at the host institution. In addition, the participating students become much more articulate about their ethical values and their sense of engagement with and responsibility for the quality of life in their communities.



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Higher Education, Community Service, and Service Learning—continued

Student interest in, knowledge of, and involvement in local civic and governmental activities also increase markedly. In brief, institutionally provided opportunities for community service and service learning benefit the participating students and assist the host institutions in the fulfillment of missions. Finally, such involvement also offers financial assistance to the participating students to pay for the costs of college attendance, an important consideration as the costs continue to rise. By becoming involved in service projects sponsored by state affiliates of Campus Compact through the auspices of the Corporation for National and Community Service and State Commissions for Community Service, the students can earn up to \$9,000 in Education Awards held in trust to pay for tuition and fees or to repay student loans.

Our experience in the State of Montana has proven the value of this approach. Campus Compact provides for State Compacts – 32 in existence at last count – that assist the member institutions in the states to compete as organized coalitions for funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service to support community service projects. In addition, close collaboration with the State Commissions on Community Service affords opportunities for the faculties, staffs, and students to enhance the services provided across the states and raise the level of civic engagement because of the collaboration with the public schools, other state agencies, and nonprofit organizations. In Montana, nearly all of the chief executives of the public, private, and Tribal colleges and universities have accepted membership, and encourage their faculties, staffs, and students to become engaged. Funded projects have engaged students and faculty in math and reading tutoring; public trail maintenance; energy conservation efforts; public policy research and development; blood and bone marrow donations; low income financial counseling; enhancing local food dispensing entities; after-school youth programs; technology assistance for public schools; community development; and in the process stimulating widespread public involvement by attracting volunteers. As a result, Montana boasts one of the highest ratings for civic engagement and community service per capita in the country, perhaps the best indicator of the quality of life in communities across the State. It seems clear, then, that institutional promotion of and support for community service and service learning contributes significantly to "Solutions for our Future" by engaging the human and intellectual resources of higher education to address community needs, helping to improve the quality of life in communities, and preparing students as the next generation of community leaders and engaged citizens.



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Young Adults Serving Montana!

By Sarah Sadowski, Program Director



Jobs for Montana's Graduates Foundation's vision is to provide Montana's young adults with opportunities to engage in service activities that meet community needs, develop leadership confidence and provide them an Education Award for higher education.

Each school year, JMGF engages 100 young adults in volunteer service across Montana, and works to give them confidence in themselves to seek higher education that they may not have thought was possible before they joined the JMGF AmeriCorps Program.

Young adults serving with this non-stipended AmeriCorps*State program can receive a \$1000 Education Award for completing 300 hours of service in their local community. Students age 17 and older can apply and serve with schools and community-based service sites across Montana performing projects such as building homes and mentoring. Each JMGF AmeriCorps Member also recruits one community volunteer to serve eight hours of service with them. Last year JMGF Members recruited 103 volunteers who contributed 1949 hours of volunteer services to Montana!

Since January 2007, JMGF AmeriCorps has engaged over 125 young adults with and without disabilities in volunteer service across Montana. These AmeriCorps Members contributed over 32,433 hours of service to schools and community based organizations.

JMGF is recruiting now!

***For more information call (406) 443-2413 or
visit www.jmgf-mt.org***

Jobs for Montana's Graduates Foundation
Connecting Students to Their Futures



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Opening Doors



By Kathy Bean
OCS Disabilities Outreach Specialist

*Promoting the inclusion
of individuals with
disabilities within
AmeriCorps programs.*

AmeriCorps Inclusion/Diversity Media Campaign

I'm so excited about our statewide media campaign that begins this month and will continue until the end of the year. Watch and listen for our disability inclusion DVD that we ran last year, along with AmeriCorps radio ads (narrated by Jack Gladstone who is a huge celebrity at a national level within the Native American community and Montana), statewide newspaper ads (14 directed to Tribal distributors), and 256 packets mailed to private and public high school career counselors and our 56 County Superintendents. We've had input from the Governor's Office, but more importantly, I'd like to hear from you! I hope you've had a chance to relax a little this summer and I look forward to our paths crossing soon.

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS (CERT)

If you are interested in participating in a 20-hour class for CERT training, please contact Lorri Ward Brown, CERT Program Manager, at 1-877-421-2323. This class covers basic first aid, fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster preparedness.

Office of Community Service Highlights



Kathy Bean
Disabilities
Outreach
Specialist

Kathy Bean serves as the Disability Outreach Specialist for the Office of Community Service. She has a long history of supporting individuals with disabilities and her passion for her work is immeasurable. Her goal is to build relationships and trust with the disability community and educate the public about persons with disabilities – creating awareness that they are an invaluable resource and want to be engaged. "We should all be treated with dignity," said Bean.

Kathy joined OCS in 2005 and her background includes teaching in the Montana public school system and working 11 years as an instructor at Helena Industries, a non-profit work service establishment for individuals with disabilities. Her role at OCS is to ensure disability inclusion in AmeriCorps – assisting persons with disabilities and their agency partners with the opportunities available in AmeriCorps. She also administers the AmeriCorps Youth Service Scholarship program.

A mother of two, she enjoys going to the family ranch most weekends with her husband. She is also quite crafty – making scrapbooks and creative, thoughtful cards to give out. Kathy is a graduate of Montana State University with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. She serves on the Statewide Independent Living Council and was recently appointed by the Governor as Interim Director of the Governor's Transition Task Force. "I enjoy being surrounded by people who have the ability to care and give to others. We should all try to make this a better planet," she said.



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Montana Ranks 5th in the Nation for Volunteer Rate!

Montana jumped from 7th to 5th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for its average volunteer rate of 38 percent with more than 284,000 Montana volunteers giving 35.3 million hours of service each year, according to the Corporation for National and Community Service.



2009-2010 AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities

The Montana Commission on Community Service is seeking proposals from eligible organizations for AmeriCorps grants that will address pressing community needs in the areas of education, environment, healthcare and public safety. Technical assistance for potential grantees is available through the Montana Commission on Community Service.

All applications must be submitted electronically in eGrants by November 3, 2008

Office of Community Service

1301 Lockey Avenue, 3rd Floor
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801
Main #: (406) 444-2573
Fax: (406) 444-4418

Linda Carlson, Executive Director
Kathy Bean, Disabilities Outreach Specialist
Tony Dean, AmeriCorps Grant Officer
Paul Fowler, Citizen Corps Program Manager
Lorri Ward Brown, CERT Program Manager
Andee Dunick, Training & Marketing Officer

The Montana Office of Community Service seeks to renew the ethic of civic responsibility by:

- Encouraging citizens of all ages and backgrounds to engage in service
- Involving youth in the life and work of communities, and
- Expanding service opportunities for all Montanans

Upcoming Events

October 25, 2008

Make A Difference Day

The national day to help others!

Celebrated each year on the fourth Saturday of October, this is the nation's largest day of volunteering. This year marks 18 years of neighbors helping neighbors.

To learn more about activities going on across the state for Make A Difference Day, visit ACMAC's website:

<http://acmac.wikidot.com/make-a-difference-day>

Look for Service Opportunities at:
<http://www.mt.gov/MCSN>